NEWS RELEASE

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MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT TRAINING FRENCH-LANGUAGE EDUCATORS TO HELP CHILDREN EXPOSED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Help For Educators To Identify And Support Students Exposed To Domestic Violence

TORONTO – The McGuinty government is launching a new program that will train more than 5,000 educators in Ontario's French-language school system to recognize and assist children who are exposed to domestic violence, Minister Responsible for Women's Issues Sandra Pupatello announced today.

"Educators are in a unique position to offer assistance to children living in violent homes because kids spend a large part of their days at school," said Pupatello. "Educators have said they want to help, and now they will have the training and the tools to do just that."

Research shows that children exposed to domestic violence are at increased risk for emotional and behavioural problems that may compromise their ability to learn and get along with others at school.

The government has invested $211,000 over two years to develop regional and school-based workshops and training materials for representatives of Ontario's 290 French language elementary schools. Regional workshops and on-line training will be offered this fall to principals, vice-principals, school board social workers and school superintendents. The workshops will be followed by school-based sessions for teachers and support staff.

These resources will be available on-line at www.aide-enfants-temoins.info/

A separate training program has been developed for educators in Ontario's English-language elementary schools. Resources will also be available to educators at www.curriculum.org\womanabuse.

"Through this training, teachers will be better equipped to support their students," said Minister of Education Kathleen Wynne. "They will also know when and how to seek help from others in the community."

"L'Association des directions et directions adjointes des écoles franco-ontariennes (ADFO) is pleased to support this initiative," said Serge Plouffe, director general of ADFO. "Preventing and stopping the violence is crucial to the well being of our students."

This funding is just one more example of how the McGuinty government, working together with community partners, has achieved results in preventing violence against women and their children:

- Spending more than $190 million annually to provide violence against women services across government. This includes more than $82 million in new funding over four years to the Domestic Violence Action Plan to provide better community-based supports, implement public education and training strategies, strengthen Ontario's criminal and family justice systems response, and provide better access to French-language services
- Funding $5.9 million over four years for training, research and conferences to assist professionals in recognizing the signs of domestic violence and provide appropriate supports and referrals

- Launching the Equality Rules public education campaign, which teaches youth ages eight to 14 about healthy, equal and respectful relationships to help break the cycle of violence before it starts. For more information, visit www.equalityrules.ca
- Investing in the Neighbours, Friends and Families public education campaign, which provides information to help individuals recognize the signs of abuse and know what action to take. Public service announcements, a website (www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca), brochures, a poster and wallet cards are available as part of the education campaign.

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